

V. REMARKS

Entry of the Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because the Amendment: a) places the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; b) does not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration because the Amendment amplifies issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; c) does not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and d) places the application in better form for appeal, should an Appeal be necessary. The Amendment is necessary and was not earlier presented because it is made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. The amendments to the subject claims do not incorporate any new subject matter into the claims. Thus, entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-5 and 7-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Yoshimura (U.S. Patent No. 4,925,515) in view of Dijk (U.S. Patent No. 3,627,602). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Yoshimura teaches an apparatus and method for applying a protective tape on a wafer and cutting it out to shape. The apparatus includes a wafer transfer table, an application roller, a subcutter, a main cutter and a take-up device. The wafer transfer table supports a wafer delivered from a loader-side wafer cassette and transports it to a location below an operative range of the main cutter. The application roller is movable while pressing a protective tape drawn from a winder shaft against the wafer on the transfer table. The subcutter cuts the protective tape along an orientation flat on the wafer while moving along with the application roller. The main cutter cuts the protective film along the circumferential outer edge of the wafer while being positioned above the wafer in a standstill condition on which protective tape has been applied. The take-up device winds thereon the protective tape from which a cutout has been made.

Dijk teaches a method and apparatus for laminating sheets in a continuous manner. The sheets are locally compressed in overlapping sections between two loading elements. At least one of the loading elements oscillate at a frequency between 0.1 and 1000 cycles per second.

Claim 1, as amended, is directed to an adhesive tape applying method for rolling an applicator roller in contact with a surface of adhesive tape and applying the adhesive tape to a first surface of a semiconductor wafer workpiece with a second surface of the semiconductor wafer workpiece disposed opposite the first surface being held by suction holding means. Claim 1 recites that the method includes a step of applying, with tape applying means, the adhesive tape to the first surface of the semiconductor wafer workpiece while the semiconductor wafer workpiece is being held at the second surface by suction via the suction holding means, while holding the adhesive tape between the applicator roller and the suction holding means and moving the applicator roller and the suction holding means relative to each other, and while vibrating the applicator roller with vibration generating means and rolling the applicator roller across the surface of the adhesive tape. Claim 1 further recites that the vibration generating means includes a swing arm pivotably connected to a connection end of the tape applying means and having an applicator roller attached to a free end of the swing arm remote from the connection end.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claim 1. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests that the vibration generating means includes a swing arm pivotably connected to a connection end of the tape applying means and having an applicator roller attached to a free end of the swing arm remote from the connection end. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the features of the applied art because such combination would not result in the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

Claim 10, as amended, is directed to an adhesive tape applying apparatus for applying adhesive tape to a first surface of a semiconductor wafer workpiece with the semiconductor wafer piece having a second surface disposed opposite the first surface. Claim 10 recites that the apparatus includes suction holding means, tape feed means, applying means and first vibration generating means.

Claim 10 recites that the suction holding means receives the semiconductor wafer workpiece and holds the semiconductor wafer workpiece at the second surface and tape feed means feeds the adhesive tape toward the semiconductor wafer workpiece held by the suction holding means. Claim 10 for the recites that the applying means rolling an applicator roller in contact with a surface of the adhesive tape and applies the adhesive tape to the first surface of the semiconductor wafer workpiece and the first vibration generating means vibrates the applicator roller when the applicator roller rolls across the surface of the adhesive tape. Also, claim 10 recites that the first vibration generating means includes a swing arm pivotably connected to a connection end of the tape applying means and has an applicator roller attached to a free end of the swing arm remote from the connection end. Additionally, claim 10 recites that the adhesive tape is applied to the first surface of the semiconductor wafer workpiece being held at the second surface by the suction holding means while the adhesive tape is held between the applicator roller and the suction holding means and the applicator roller and the suction means are moved relative to each other while the adhesive tape is vibrated.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claim 10. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests that the first vibration generating means includes a swing arm pivotably connected to a connection end of the tape applying means and has an applicator roller attached to a free end of the swing arm remote from the connection end. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the features of the applied art because such combination would not result in the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 10 is allowable over the applied art.

Claims 14, 21 and 22 are canceled and therefore the rejection as applied to these claims is now moot.

Claims 3-5 and 7-9 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1. Claims 11-13 and 15-20 depend from claim 10 and include all of the

features of claim 10. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reasons the independent claims are allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

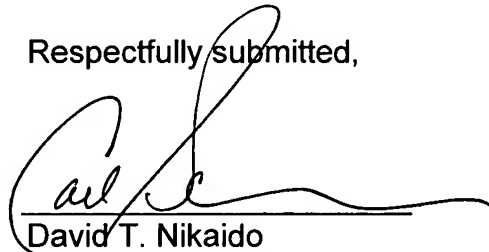
In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure(s): Amendment Transmittal

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